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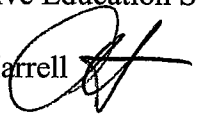
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August 15, 2007

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Legislative Education Study Committee

**FR:** David Harrell 

**RE: STAFF REPORT: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF K-3 PLUS**

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**2007 Legislation:**

As endorsed by the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and enacted by the 2007 Legislature (Laws 2007, Chapter 12), K-3 Plus is a six-year pilot project that extends the school year in kindergarten through third grade by at least 25 instructional days, beginning up to two months earlier than other classes. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate that increased time in kindergarten and the early grades narrows the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students, increases cognitive skills, and leads to higher test scores for all participants. Thus, the program will measure the effect of the additional time on literacy, numeracy, and social skills development of the participants.

Among its other provisions, the legislation:

- requires the Public Education Department (PED) to administer the program and provide the funding for approved projects;
- requires PED, in evaluating applications for K-3 Plus programs, to grant priority to those schools with Kindergarten Plus programs that have received one or more satisfactory annual evaluations;
- specifies that K-3 Plus must be conducted in high-poverty public schools – that is, schools in which at least 85 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch at the time of application;

- requires PED to determine application requirements and procedures, as well as evaluation criteria;
- requires PED to provide additional professional development for K-3 Plus teachers in how young children learn to read;
- specifies that teachers and educational assistants must be paid at the same rate and under the same terms as teachers and educational assistants in regular educational programs;
- requires that students be evaluated at the beginning of the program and that their progress be measured (1) in literacy, using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in kindergarten through grade 3; and (2) in numeracy in grades 3 and 4;
- requires PED to report annually to the Legislature and the Governor on the efficacy of the project; and
- allows PED to use up to 4.0 percent of any legislative appropriation for K-3 Plus for professional development for participating educators and department administrative costs.

In addition to enacting the programmatic legislation, the 2007 Legislature appropriated more than \$7.0 million for K-3 Plus for FY 08 in the *General Appropriation Act of 2007* and an additional \$336,000 for Kindergarten Plus transportation.

Finally, because the legislation was enacted with an emergency clause, the provisions have been in effect since March 13, 2007, the date that the bill was signed into law. The appropriations, however, were not available until July 1, 2007.

### **Implementation of K-3 Plus in School Year 2007-2008:**

#### ***Request for Proposals***

In mid-April 2007, PED notified school districts of the department's request that any schools interested in implementing a K-3 Plus program should submit a letter of intent to apply by April 27, 2007. The guidelines for this letter of intent describe the purpose of the program and identify certain features, such as the required DIBELS assessment and professional development for teachers (including lodging and stipends). These guidelines also enumerate a number of program criteria, among them that the school must have a full-day kindergarten program in place, that all program staff must attend professional development, and that schools in Corrective Action, Restructuring 1, or Restructuring 2 will receive priority.

On April 24, 2007, PED issued a request for proposals (RFP) for K-3 Plus programs and held a pre-proposal conference in Santa Fe. The RFP explained the eligibility requirements, the timeline of activities, the assessment requirements, the sources and uses of funding, and the evaluation and reporting requirements. Under funding information, the RFP notes an estimated cost for a K-3 Plus project as \$18,500 per class and indicates that programs will continue to be funded through the end of the pilot program on June 30, 2013, "pending availability of funds and compliance with the project requirements."

One criterion, or eligibility requirement, that appears in neither the letter of intent nor the RFP is the one in the statute providing the program: that, in evaluating applications for K-3 Plus programs, PED must grant priority to those schools with Kindergarten Plus programs that have received one or more satisfactory annual evaluations. This absence notwithstanding, PED explains that its review of the programs did apply that priority.

Because it affords a more inclusive list, PED applied the federal Provision II eligibility criteria for the school lunch program administered by the US Department of Agriculture to determine the number of elementary schools throughout the state that meet the eligibility criteria for the K-3 Plus for school year 2007-2008: a total of 206. Of those 206, 62 submitted proposals, and PED approved them all. Of those 62, PED funded all but eight to implement K-3 Plus at the beginning of school year 2007-2008 (see Attachment). Those eight were unable to retain teachers for the program or found that they lacked sufficient time to plan the program.

The amount of funding awarded to each program was based upon the amount requested in the proposal. Based on these amounts, PED has calculated an average per-student cost of \$711. According to data provided by PED, however, the per-student cost varies widely by school: from a low of \$198 to a high of \$1,185. This range, PED explains, results from variations in the length of contracts and the salaries of teachers, educational assistants, special education teachers, and other staff, as well as the costs of supplies and materials.

Most of the 54 programs funded for school year 2007-2008 (32, in fact) have extended all four grades, kindergarten through grade 3. Others plan to use different grade configurations:

- eight have extended the kindergarten year only;
- four have extended kindergarten and grade 1; and
- three have extended kindergarten through grade 2.

Other grade configurations include kindergarten and grade 2 (one school), grades 1 through 3 (three schools), grades 2 and 3 (two schools), and grade 3 only (one school).

Altogether, the K-3 Plus programs operating in school year 2007-2008 are expected to serve more than 5,000 students in 17 school districts throughout the state.

Finally, PED intends to issue another RFP in December 2007 for programs that will begin in June 2008. The program budget has allocated approximately \$3.0 million of the FY 08 appropriation for this purpose.

### ***Professional Development***

To satisfy the requirement for additional professional development for teachers in the project, PED hosted a professional development institute at the Hyatt Tamaya Resort in Bernalillo in early June 2007. To provide the professional development services, PED contracted with Regional Education Cooperative (REC) #9 in Ruidoso, using funds from Title I, Indian Education, and mathematics and science professional development (\$20,000 from each of the three). Funds from other sources were necessary because, as noted above, the percentage of the K-3 Plus appropriation for professional development was unavailable at that time.

The contract required REC #9 to provide professional development in literacy, math, social skills, and DIBELS assessment, through such topics as instructional strategies and hands-on activities for reading, math, and social skills. The contract also calls for REC #9 to provide a K-3 Plus institute at the approved school sites.

The two-day institute in June consisted of a full day of DIBELS training, four breakout sessions, and three keynote addresses.

- As noted above, DIBELS is the literacy assessment measure prescribed by the K-3 Plus statute. PED also requires it of all schools with Reading First grants. Most of this session offered detailed explanations of scoring and administering DIBELS and interpreting and using the results as a means of helping teachers know when their students are not on grade-level track and which foundational skills need further support. The session also addressed the “five big ideas” in beginning reading:
  - phonemic awareness, which is “the ability to hear and manipulate sound in words”;
  - phonics, which is “the ability to associate sounds with letters and use these sounds to read words”;
  - fluency, which is the “automatic ability to read words in isolation . . . and connected text”;
  - vocabulary development, which is “the ability to understand . . . and use . . . words to acquire and convey meaning”; and
  - comprehension, which is the “complex cognitive process involving the intentional interaction between reader and text to construct meaning.”
- One of the breakout sessions, “Effective School Cultures,” focused on classroom management, largely through an explanation of the three-tiered model of Positive Behavior Supports that, like DIBELS, is a product of the University of Oregon.
- “Reach for the Stars,” another breakout session, addressed the special needs of English language learners (ELLs), emphasizing, among other points, the differences between social and academic English, techniques that teachers may use to reinforce the development of academic English when teaching other subjects, and effective approaches to vocabulary development in ELLs.
- The next breakout session, “S.T.A.R.S” (Strategies that Accelerate Reading Success), provided additional information about and strategies for teaching the five big ideas in reading noted above.
- The final breakout session, “A Framework for Understanding Poverty,” was designed to help participants determine the most effective approaches and interventions to help students from poverty succeed in school. Part of the dilemma, this session explained, is that schools generally operate according to middle-class norms and values that are unfamiliar to students living in poverty.

- The keynote addresses were delivered by Representative Mimi Stewart (the sponsor of the legislation); Dr. Eugene Garcia, Vice President for Educational Partnerships, Arizona State University; and Dr. Veronica C. García, New Mexico Secretary of Public Education.

Finally, both the letter of intent and the RFP emphasized that attendance at this professional development institute was a requirement of the award, although the RFP exempted those teachers who have been implementing the K-Plus program. This requirement notwithstanding, however, 11 schools with successful proposals failed to send their teachers to the institute. To compensate, PED hosted a make-up professional development session in July so that all 54 programs operating in school year 2007-2008 fulfilled their professional development requirements.

### ***Evaluation***

The RFP lays the groundwork for PED's evaluation of the K-3 Plus Pilot Project. It requires all schools receiving funding to participate in all evaluation activities, which include submitting a status report at the end of each implementation year and receiving site visits by evaluators or PED staff. Schools must also provide PED with assessment data from DIBELS and the state standards-based assessment. The RFP further requires that schools report demographic data; additional funding sources; staffing, endorsements, and licensure levels; program elements; professional development activities; parental involvement activities; and program highlights, challenges, obstacles, and suggested modifications. Using these data and the recently implemented student identification number, PED plans to track the progress of students through the early grades, including New Mexico PreK, beginning with school year 2007-2008. See also "Background," below.

The evaluation of New Mexico's K-3 Plus program will be useful not only to the state but also, perhaps, to the nation. According to a report in the May 17, 2007 issue of *Education Daily*, despite the growing interest in extended time for learning (see "Background," below), there has so far been little research to document its effects. More pointedly, the Council of Chief State School Officers advises that states and districts that change their learning structure must be diligent in evaluating the initiative.

### **Background:**

K-3 Plus is modeled after Kindergarten Plus, a program implemented in 2003 in four school districts for a three-year period and then extended in 2006 for a six-year period to other school districts with high-poverty schools. During school year 2006-2007, three new school districts offered Kindergarten Plus; and the four original districts expanded their programs so that, altogether, 29 Kindergarten Plus classes in seven school districts were serving approximately 962 students.

During the 2006 interim, PED testified to the LESC that its evaluation of year three of the program – like the evaluations of years one and two conducted by the Office of Education Accountability – found overall positive results in the assessment data, with students demonstrating significant growth in all four areas measured by DIBELS: letter-naming fluency, initial sound fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, and nonsense word fluency. Furthermore,

the PED evaluation found that, in every school, more Kindergarten Plus students reached benchmarks than their counterparts who did not participate in Kindergarten Plus and that teachers and administrators continue to view the program as an effective way to ensure that students are prepared for kindergarten and first grade. Among the recommendations derived from its evaluation, PED called for continued expansion of the program, which K-3 Plus provides.

The concept for K-Plus originated with the late Sandra Feldman, former president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), in a speech delivered to the AFT convention in July 2002. Although New Mexico seems to be the only jurisdiction to have implemented either a K-Plus or K-3 Plus program, there has been considerable interest throughout the country recently in expanding the time that students spend in school, especially in kindergarten (or pre-kindergarten) through grade 3.

- In a recent speech, the current AFT President, Edward McElroy, recommended that union leaders and lawmakers collaborate to create extended school year programs for struggling students in kindergarten through third grade. However, unlike New Mexico's K-3 Plus program, which adds 25 instructional days at the beginning of the year, McElroy's proposal would add time (at least 20 days) at the end of the school term.
- Also speaking recently was Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, who predicted that extending time in school is likely to be one of the major education policies in the near future.
- In August 2004 the National Center for Education Statistics published *From Kindergarten Through Third Grade: Children's Beginning School Experiences*, the fourth in a series of studies of more than 22,000 children across the country who were enrolled in kindergarten in school year 1998-1999. One of the conclusions of this study is that the achievement gaps identified at the beginning of school grew wider over the first four years of school attendance. In other words, when all children are on the same schedule, the achievement gaps increase – the very problem that the K-3 Plus program is intended to address.
- Reinforcing this point, a report by Education Sector, *On the Clock: Rethinking the Way Schools Use Time*, contends that increasing time in school can have a positive effect in overcoming summer learning loss and closing the achievement gap.
- Citing several studies from 1996 through 2006, a recent (July 2007) Issue Paper from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), *Making the Case for P-3*, explains the significance of third grade as an end point in a preschool through grade 3 educational continuum:

Extending the continuum to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is supported by another body of literature that shows that, by age 8, children have acquired a range of both academic and social competencies that form the foundation for later learning and development. By this time, children have acquired important processes that lead to complex changes in problem-solving and learning; for most children, by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they are no longer learning to read but are reading to learn . . . By age 8, most children have developed self-regulation and social competence, cornerstones

of early childhood development that cut across all aspects of behavior, allowing children to make friends, get along with adults and peers, and to reap maximum benefits from a wide range of learning opportunities.

- While the P-3 continuum in the ECS report begins at birth and ends at third grade, other approaches start later in the child's life, typically at age three or four. One of these is PK-3, espoused by Eugene Garcia, one of the keynote speakers at PED's professional development institute in June. According to Garcia, high-quality pre-kindergarten through grade 3 education can make "a tremendous difference" for Hispanic students in particular because those years, he says, are critical for learning English.

As a final point, there is this note of caution: regarding time spent in school, more is not necessarily better. As a May 2007 report by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development explains, only when the added time is used to deliver engaging instruction that enhances student learning does more time equal better time. Likewise, another report concludes, "Adding more hours would ostensibly provide more time for everything that occurs in schools. In the best schools, this means more academic learning time. In poorly managed schools with inexperienced teachers, it means time will continue to be lost, but in greater amounts." This point notwithstanding, however, the provisions for curriculum, assessment, evaluation, and reporting prescribed by the K-3 Plus statute should ensure that the additional time is well spent.

### **Policy Options:**

As the K-3 Plus Pilot Project proceeds and as PED begins its evaluation of the program, the need for certain revisions may emerge. In the meantime, two potential policy options might be noted:

- because the statute enacting K-3 Plus has incorporated and superseded the earlier statute enacting K-Plus, the committee may wish to consider repealing the earlier statute; and
- given the growing interest in the K-3 or Pre-K-3 sequence, the committee may wish to consider endorsing a memorial asking PED to study whether schools with that grade configuration would benefit students more so than traditional elementary school configurations.

### **Presenters:**

For this presentation, the committee will hear from directors of two K-3 Plus programs implemented in school year 2007-2008, both of which have expanded grades K-3.

- The first is Ms. Theresa Archuleta, Principal of Valle Vista Elementary School, Albuquerque Public Schools, which is offering K-3 Plus as an expansion of K-Plus.
- The second is Ms. Nadine Vigil, Assistant Principal, Enos Garcia Elementary School, Taos Municipal Schools, which is offering K-3 Plus as a new program.

**SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008 K-3 PLUS**  
APPROVED AND CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	FRLP %	Design 2005/06	Priority School SY 06-07	Grades	Proj # of Students	Initial Funding Request	Initial Funding Approved
1	ALBUQUERQUE	97%	CA-delay	Priority	K-3	139	168,246	128,491
2	ALBUQUERQUE	92%	None		K	40	46,488	40,504
3	ALBUQUERQUE	100%	None		K & 2	36	55,310	37,563
4	ALBUQUERQUE	88%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	124	151,678	116,622
5	ALBUQUERQUE	94%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	188	224,861	171,092
6	ALBUQUERQUE	94%	SI-2	Priority	K-3	166	364,447	161,076
7	ALBUQUERQUE	100%	None		K-3	84	98,745	74,721
8	ALBUQUERQUE	87%	None		K	40	52,944	41,504
9	ALBUQUERQUE	100%	R 1 delay	Priority	K-3	120	150,810	116,490
10	ALBUQUERQUE	99%	None		K	30	44,134	35,554
11	ALBUQUERQUE	85%	R 2	Priority	K-3	87	119,036	94,155
12	ALBUQUERQUE	86%	None		K-3	97	127,794	96,252
13	ALBUQUERQUE	99%	None		1-3	88	99,114	73,946
14	ALBUQUERQUE	100%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	100	125,338	96,737
15	ALBUQUERQUE	90%	R 2	Priority	K-3	261	270,732	270,732
16	ALBUQUERQUE	100%	None		K-1	40	49,188	37,748
17	BERNALILLO	98%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	86	74,000	53,900
18	BERNALILLO	97%	None		K-1	115	111,000	102,896
19	CENTRAL CONS.	96%	R 2	Priority	K-3	81	74,000	59,936
20	CENTRAL CONS.	89%	R 1 delay	Priority	K-3	81	74,000	59,936
21	CENTRAL CONS.	87%	CA delay	Priority	K-3	88	74,000	59,936
22	CENTRAL CONS.	90%	R 1 delay	Priority	K-3	88	74,000	59,936
23	CLOVIS	93%	CA	Priority	1-3	157	55,500	45,680
24	DEMING	97%	None		K-3	30	32,665	32,865
25	DEMING	100%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	73	90,897	57,444
26	GADSDEN	92%	CA	Priority	K-1	80	55,502	25,600
27	GADSDEN	94%	SI-1	Priority	K-2	80	23,859	18,669
28	GALLUP	92%	R 2	Priority	K-3	80	74,000	50,000
29	GALLUP	89%	R 2	Priority	2-3	80	55,500	36,302
30	GALLUP	94%	SI-1 delay		K-3	80	74,000	50,850
31	GALLUP	86%	R 2	Priority	K-3	100	92,500	39,150
32	GALLUP	96%	R 2	Priority	K-2	80	55,500	64,250
33	GALLUP	88%	None	Priority	K	80	18,500	15,800

**RECEIVED  
VIA E-MAIL  
AUG 10 2007**



DISTRICT	SCHOOL	FRLP %	Design 2005/06	Priority School SY 06-07	Grade/s	Proj.# of Students	Initial Funding Request	Initial Funding Approved
34 GALLUP	TOHATCHI ES	91%	R 2	Priority	K-3	80	55,500	50,000
35 HOBBS**	JEFFERSON ES	88%	None		K	45	37,000	pending
36 HOBBS**	SOUTHERN HEIGHTS ES	90%	None		K	65	53,040	pending
37 JEMEZ MOUNTAIN	LYBROOK ES	89%	R 1	Priority	K-3	45	60,880	48,880
38 LAS CRUCES	BOOKER T. WASHINGTON ES	97%	None		K-3	80	65,128	81,209
39 LAS CRUCES	CESAR CHAVEZ ES	86%	None		K-2	140	63,003	79,274
40 LAS CRUCES	CONLEE ES	86%	SI-1 delay	Priority	K-3	160	72,459	78,572
41 LAS CRUCES	MACARTHUR ES	90%	None		K-3	160	73,469	91,967
42 LAS CRUCES	SUNRISE ES	88%	SI-1	Priority	3	100	51,687	49,880
43 LAS CRUCES	VALLEY VIEW ES	88%	None		K-3	200	93,820	117,661
44 LAS VEGAS WEST	DON CECILIO ES	99%	None		2-3	80	42,400	38,020
45 LAS VEGAS WEST	LUIS E. ARMILLO ES	100%	None		K-1	80	47,302	42,922
46 LAS VEGAS WEST	VALLEY ES	98%	None		K-3	80	44,613	40,233
47 MAGDALENA	MAGDALENA ES	96%	R 2	Priority	K	69	94,352	78,932
48 PENASCO	PENASCO ES	90%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	80	74,000	49,468
49 ROSWELL	EAST GRAND PLAINS ES	100%	None		K	15	18,500	9,800
50 ROSWELL	PECOS ES	100%	R 2	Priority	K-3	88	92,500	63,016
51 ROSWELL	SUNSET ES	100%	CA-delay	Priority	1-3	86	74,000	43,551
52 SILVER CITY	SIXTH ST. ES	89%	None		K-3	52	66,821	64,367
53 SOCORRO	PARKVIEW ES	94%	None		K-3	80	47,175	47,359
54 TAOS	ENOS GARCIA - TAOS ES	91%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	185	195,846	129,056
TOTALS							4,681,783	3,630,504

\* DATA PROVIDED BY PRIORITY SCHOOLS 8.08.2007

\*\* AWAITING BUDGET REVISIONS

# SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008 K-3 PLUS

## Approved Submitted Proposals - UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	FRLP %	Design 2005/06	* Priority School SY 06-07	Grades	Proj # of Students	Initial Funding Request	Initial Funding Approved
1	ALBUQUERQUE	89%	SI-1	Priority	K-3	76	93,829	72,169
2	DULCE	96%	R 2	Priority	K-3	100	88,484	88,484
3	GADSDEN	92%	SI-1	Priority	K,1,3	137	134,997	134,997
4	SANTA FE	89%	R 2	Priority	K	80	55,467	55,467
5	LARRAGOITE ES	74%	None		K	40	55,467	55,467
6	RAMIREZ-THOMAS ES	95%	SI-2	Priority	K	80	33,305	33,305
7	SALAZAR ES	91%	SI-1	Priority	K	60	44,386	44,386
8	R.M. SWEENEY ES	93%	None		K	120	77,629	77,629
TOTALS						693	583,964	561,904